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Sweden

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards - Narrative

FAIRS Country Report

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Report Highlights:

This report gives an overview of food laws currently in force in Sweden. For information on the general EU level, please refer to the USEU Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report available at www.fas.usda.gov/posthome/useu/ as well as at www.fas.usda.gov. Updates have been made in Section V Pesticide and Other Contaminants, Section VI Other Regulations and Requirements, Section VIII Copyright and/or Trademark Laws and Appendix II Other Import Specialist Contacts.

Section I. Food Laws:

Responsibility for the safety of food and agricultural products in Sweden is shared between three Swedish authorities: the Swedish Board of Agriculture, the National Food Administration (NFA) and, to a lesser degree, the National Board of Fisheries. The NFA is the central supervisory authority for matters relating to food, including imports.

Sweden is a member of the European Union (EU) and Swedish national food legislation is, to a large extent, harmonized with the EU's food legislation. In certain cases, however, there is room for national interpretation of the EU's legislation. Sweden applies more restrictive legislation with regard to pesticides and irradiation, under the umbrella of public health precautions. In addition, Sweden has received a derogation allowing it to apply stricter salmonella control and stricter border controls (quarantine on imports of live animals) than that of other EU member countries. Traditionally, Sweden has not had outbreaks of salmonella. This is due to a combination of a sea barrier separating Sweden from the continent, border control and an extensive and far-reaching domestic control system.

This report gives an overview of food laws currently in force in Sweden. For information on the general EU level, please refer to the USEU Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report available at www.fas.usda.gov/posthome/useu/ as well as at www.fas.usda.gov.

Section II. Labeling Requirements:

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report. Information on labeling requirements specific for Sweden is given below.

Small Packages

Sweden applies specific labeling requirements for “small packages” where the largest surface is less than 10 cm². This exemption is not generally applicable throughout the EU. Specific nutritional labeling rules are still applicable when a so-called nutrition claim is included on the label. For margarine, a fat declaration is required regardless of the size of the package. Information on sweetener content is also required on small packages. Foodstuffs consisting of one single ingredient need no list of ingredients if the sales name of the foodstuff is identical to the sales name of the ingredient, or if the ingredient is clearly stated by the sales name, e.g. tea, sugar, raisins.

The Swedish “Keyhole” Logo

In 1989, the National Food Administration implemented a voluntary labeling system for foods that are leaner and contain less sugars and salt and more fiber than food products of the same type normally do. A “keyhole” symbol can be printed on the package of these products, be attached on shelves in stores or used in advertising and marketing of the products. The symbol is free of cost as well as free to use for products from all countries. No previous acceptance or licensing is necessary. Its application is supervised by the local public health administration. However, the products must meet the standards established by the National Food Administration. Detailed information about the keyhole symbol can be found at the following link.

http://www.slv.se/upload/nfa/documents/food_regulations/Keyhole_2005_9.pdf

Section III. Packaging and Container Regulations:

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report. Information on packaging and container regulations specific for Sweden is given below.

Recycling of Packaging Materials in Packaging Waste

Plastic bottles and metal cans may not be sold in Sweden unless they participate in an approved recovery system. The annual registration fee to participate in a recovery system is 10,000 SEK (approximately US\$1,400). For more detailed information please refer to the Swedish “Ordinance on deposit-and-return system for plastic bottles and metal cans” at the following link:

<http://www.siv.se/download/18.1d07c3f108381dd74480002170/SFS+2005-220+eng.+ver.doc>

Section IV. Food Additives Regulations:

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report.

Section V. Pesticides and Other Contaminants:

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report. Information on pesticide and contaminant regulations specific for Sweden is given below.

Swedish Maximum Residue Levels for Dioxins in Fish

Sweden applies EU maximum residue levels with regard to dioxin. Due to the relatively high dioxin levels in fish from the Baltic Sea, however, Sweden (and Finland) has received a derogation allowing fish with dioxin levels exceeding the EU thresholds to be sold in Sweden under the condition that they are not exported to other EU countries. This exception will remain until 2011. During 2011, the Swedish government will decide whether to apply for a new derogation. Its decision will be based on an investigation led by the National Food Administration.

Atomic Radiation

Sweden applies national maximum permitted levels of radioactivity in food: 300 Bq/kg for meat, meat products, cereal-based fruits (except nuts) vegetables (except mushrooms), baby food, dairy products and marine (sea) fish. The limit for game meat, fish from inland waters, wild berries and mushrooms and nuts is 1500 Bq/kg.

Section VI. Other Regulations and Requirements:

A. Product Inspection and Registration Requirement

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report.

B. Certification and Documentation Requirements

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report. Information on certification and document requirements specific for Sweden is given below.

Swedish Salmonella Control Program

Fresh meat (included frozen), ground meat and meat preparations imported into Sweden are subject to salmonella control at the border inspection post, unless a declaration on the veterinary certificate states that it has been tested according to Commission decision 1688/2005.

Section VII. Other Specific Standards:

A. Genetically Modified Foods (GMOs)

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report.

B. Novel Foods

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report.

C. Dietetic or Special Use Food

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report.

D. Wine, Beer and Other Alcoholic Beverages

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report. Information specific for Sweden is given below.

Swedish Alcohol Monopoly

Retail sales of wine and liquor in Sweden are restricted to a government agency, Systembolaget. Systembolaget handles all over-the-counter sales of wine, spirits, and full-strength beer in Sweden. The Government of Sweden (GOS) managed to retain the retail monopoly despite its accession to the EU in 1995, but had to relinquish its monopoly on importing, wholesaling, production and exporting of wines and spirits. Importers other than Systembolaget must either supply the government monopoly or restrict their sales to the hotel and restaurant trade. To import and/or produce alcoholic beverages, a license issued by the Special Tax Office in Ludvika is required, but imports are otherwise unrestricted.

E. Organic Foods

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report. Information on organic food standards specific for Sweden is given below.

Swedish KRAV-Label

The association KRAV has long been, and still is, a key player on the organic market in Sweden. KRAV develops organic standards and promotes the KRAV label. Until recently, it was difficult to market organic products in Sweden without the KRAV label. The KRAV seal is still the dominant organic label in Sweden, but the awareness of other labels, such as the EU logo, is increasing.

The KRAV standards are based on the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement (IFOAM) standards for organic production and are also compatible with EU regulations. For U.S. organic products which are IFOAM certified, getting access to the KRAV seal is not problematic. Without IFOAM certification, obtaining the KRAV seal could be both time-consuming and costly.

Four private organizations are recognized by the National Food Administration to carry out inspection and certification. These are Aranea Certifiering AB (subsidiary to KRAV), SMAK AB, HS Certifiering AB and Valiguard AB.

F. Vertical Legislation (Breakfast Directives)

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report.

G. Animal Products

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report.

H. Frozen Foodstuffs

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report.

I. Ionizing Radiation

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report. Information on ionizing radiation requirements specific for Sweden is given below.

Swedish legislation only allows for spices to be treated with irradiation. A food that has been treated with irradiation may be imported only if the treatment is permitted in Sweden.

J. Fruits and Vegetables

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report.

K. Seafood

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report.

Section VIII. Copyright and/or Trademark Laws:

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report. Information on trademarks specific for Sweden is given below.

Registration of a trademark in Sweden may be obtained through the filing of an application with the Swedish Patent and Registration office. All communications and submitted documents must be in Swedish. Contact information for this office is the following:

Trademarks Department
Box 530
SE-826 27 Söderhamn
Phone: +46 8-782 25 00
Fax: +46 270-173 51
E-mail: prv.varumärke@prv.se

Protected Geographical Indications

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report.

Section IX. Import Procedures:

Please refer to the USEU FAIRS Report.

To import foodstuffs for commercial purposes it is necessary to be registered as an importer with the National Food Administration. The application should be sent to:

Livsmedelsverket
Box 622
751 26 Uppsala
Sweden
Telephone +46 18 17 55 00
Web site: <http://www.slv.se>

National and EU import license/sanitary certificate can be obtained from:

National Board of Agriculture
551 82 Jönköping
Sweden
Telephone +46 36 15 50 00
Web site www.sjv.se.

The VAT rate for foodstuffs in Sweden is 12%, but a higher rate of 25% applies to alcoholic beverages and tobacco products. Other potential taxes and charges include an alcohol tax, a random sampling fee, a plant protection fee or a quality control fee.

Information on customs clearance can be obtained from the Swedish Customs website
<http://www.tullverket.se/en>

Appendix I. Government Regulatory Agency Contacts:

For U.S. exporters and Swedish importers, the key authority for food legislation, as well as enforcement thereof, is generally the National Food Administration (NFA). Therefore, it is recommended that U.S. companies or their import agents primarily contact the NFA:

Livsmedelsverket (National Food Administration)
Box 622
751 26 Uppsala
Sweden
Tel: +46 18 17 55 00
Web site: www.slv.se

However, it should be mentioned that other state authorities also have responsibility for issuing regulations affecting imports.

Veterinary, sanitary and phytosanitary issues, such as plant protection, animal health and animal welfare requirements and imports of live animals, are handled by the following authority:

Jordbruksverket, (Swedish Board of Agriculture)
SE-551 82 Jönköping,
Sweden
Telephone + 46 36 15 50 00
Telefax + 46 36 19 05 46
e-mail: jordbruksverket@sjv.se.

The Board is responsible for import controls aimed at the prevention of diseases and pests as well as quality control of fruit, vegetables and meat classification. They also oversee the import of PET bottles and aluminum cans. In addition, the Swedish Board of Agriculture is the key authority for exporters/importers with regard to applications for tariff-rate quotas (reduced or zero tariffs within a quota).

The National Board of Fisheries advises the NFA on fishery topics. However, it does not directly fulfill any official functions with regard to import controls/legislation:

Fiskeriverket (National Board of Fisheries)
Box 423
SE-401 26 Gothenburg
<http://www.fiskeriverket.se>
Telephone: + 46 31 743 03 00
Telefax: 46 31 743 04 44

In order to import alcoholic beverages, a special permit must be obtained. Applications for permits are obtained at:

Särskilda skattekontoret (The Special Tax Office in Sweden)
771 83, Ludvika,
Sweden,
Tel +46 240 870 00
<http://www.rsv.se>

Some health foods may be classified as pharmaceutical products. The contact for such products is:

Läkemedelsverket (Medical Products Agency)
Box 26
751 03 Uppsala, Sweden
Tel: +46 18 17 46 00
www.mpa.se

Information regarding Swedish Trademark Protection can be obtained from:

PRV Bolag
SE-851 81 Sundsvall, Sweden,
Telephone +46 60 18 40 00
Telefax +46 60 12 98 40
E-mail prv.bolag@prv.se

The contact point for consultation/notification relating to the granting of single authorizations involving several Member States is:

The Swedish Customs Administration
P.O. Box 12 854
SE-112 98 Stockholm, Sweden
Telephone: +46 771 - 520 520
Fax: +46 8 20 80 12
www.tullverket.se/en

Customs clearance
E-mail: malardalen.info@tullverket.se
Phone +46 771 23 23 23 (open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) to get answers to your questions about Customs matters. On the telephone you will first hear a message in Swedish. Wait until the message is over, then press number 5 on the telephone keypad and you will be connected to a Customs officer who can answer your questions in English.

The authority responsible for issuing permits to import alcoholic beverages into Sweden is:

Särskilda skattekontoret (The Special Tax Office in Sweden)
771 83, Ludvika, Sweden
Tel: +46 240 870 00
www.rsv.se

Appendix II. Other Import Specialist Contacts:

U.S. Embassy
Foreign Agricultural Service
Dag Hammarskjölds Väg 31
115 89 Stockholm
Tel: + 46 8 783 5470/5392
Fax: +46 8 662 8495
Email: AgStockholm@fas.usda.gov

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